



## **Minutes Mayor's Commission on Disability Concerns November 2, 2015**

Minutes of the MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITY CONCERNS meeting held on Monday, November 2, 2015, 6:30 P.M. at the Tempe Public Library, 3500 S. Rural Road, Board Room, Tempe Arizona 85282.

### **MEMBERS Present:**

Chair Irene Mochel  
Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz  
Jeff Oats  
Kim W. Fisher  
Tom Ringhofer  
Diane Moran

### **MEMBERS Absent:**

Ben Campbell  
Rachel Phillips

### **Guests:**

Eric Iwersen, Principle Planner  
Jim Lamb, Tempe Resident

### **Diversity Staff Present:**

Michele Stokes, ADA Compliance Specialist

**Chair Irene Mochel** called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

**Public Appearances**

None

**Agenda Item 1 - Consideration of Minutes: MCDC – October 5, 2015 Minutes**

The October 5, 2015 CDC Minutes were APPROVED, with minor corrections.

Motion: **Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz.**

Second: **Commissioner Tom Ringhofer.** Motion carried.

**Agenda Item 2 – Alameda Drive Streetscape Concept Design – Eric Iwersen, Principle Planner**

Tempe Public Works Principle Planner Eric Iwersen provided information and a Power Point presentation on the design concepts for the Alameda Drive Pedestrian and Bicycle project. The project's \$75,000 in funding for planning was obtained through Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). This amount does not include funding for construction or other activities.

The Alameda Drive Streetscape project is divided into the following sections:

- A. From 48<sup>th</sup> Street to the I-10 Overpass – by Tempe Diablo
- B. I-10 Overpass to Priest Drive – by Fountainhead
- C. Priest Drive to Hardy Drive – along the Industrial District
- D. Hardy Drive to Roosevelt Street – along the Industrial District
- E. Roosevelt St. to Wilson St. – along the Industrial District
- F. UPRR to Rural Road – east of College Avenue (Alternative A)  
UPRR to Rural Road – east of College Avenue (Alternative B)

Eric Iwersen shared background information indicating that Alameda Drive corridor is regionally significant with connections to both Phoenix and Mesa. The scope of the project is to collect and analyze transportation data, solicit public input on potential improvements, develop pedestrian/bicycle concepts and create preferred alternatives to be used for grant applications for federal funding.

Information was provided that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is planning to construct a new pedestrian overpass connecting both ends of Alameda Drive on either side of the I-10. The project is part of a larger improvement to the interstate and will be constructed by ADOT.

The Union Pacific Railroad Crossing improvement of Alameda includes proposed future improvements:

- A two-party agreement for a private crossing with public characteristics.
- Replacement of crossing surface and asphalt approaches.
- Installation of flashing lights, audible devices and crossing signage.
- New pavement markings and advance warning signs.

Additionally, the crossing will no longer have the bollards that prohibit access by pedestrians using wheelchairs, tricycles, and other wheeled devices wider than a bicycle.

Opportunities for public input were provided through public meetings and online surveys from May 6<sup>th</sup> through June 14, 2015. Various sections of the project received comment as to their importance as improvement elements including those below:

**Group 1 - Important**

Dedicated bike lanes

Sidewalk/Intersections improvements for pedestrians

Priority signalization

**Group 2 – Less important**

Enhanced lighting

Intersection improvements (ADA)

Wayfinding/signage

Medians/traffic calming

Landscaping

**Group 3 - Neutral**

Narrower lanes

Art elements

On street parking

Commissioners' discussion included questions regarding the reason for the change in width of the sidewalk ranging from 4 foot wide to 6 foot wide, at the different sections (A-F).

**Commissioners recommend that all sidewalks be made as wide as allowable, preferably no less than 6 feet wide, to facilitate pedestrians using wheelchairs who may be traveling in opposite directions.** The clear width for a walking surface for one wheelchair is 3 feet wide. It is understood that the availability of right-of way property may be a factor, but whenever possible 6 foot wide sidewalks are requested to facilitate passage by others. If a sidewalk must be less than 5 foot wide, the ADA requires a passing space at 200 foot intervals, but it is recognized that the passing space is not the best solution in a new project.

Commissioner Tom Ringhofer asked whether the bike paths would be preferable for power chair users to travel, as some of their top speeds can now range 10-15 miles per hour. Presenter Eric Iwersen said that further research is needed, but it is not recommended that wheelchair users travel in the bike lane for safety reasons of the both bicyclists and pedestrians using wheelchairs.

Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz asked for clarification regarding the plans proposal to remove the center turn lane at the Tempe Diablo (A) section, as ball park traffic can be heavy when there are games. It was clarified that traffic management can temporarily create a second lane for ingress/egress by using the bike path and buffer area on game days.

Commissioner Tom Ringhofer asked if there could be a short term temporary accommodation at the UPRR crossing, as it now exists with bollards and inaccessible path across the tracks. He said this presents problems for the residents of Broadway Apartments, which houses a number of people who use wheelchairs. Presenter Eric Iwersen said that because the current UPRR agreement stipulated the bollards as a safety measure in the late 1980's they cannot be changed at this time without violating the agreement. This project will facilitate a new agreement and create a new accessible path that meets safety design and ADA design specifications. It is anticipated that construction may begin as soon as 18 months after funding is received for construction.

Commissioner Kim Fisher asked about the parking lot on the west side of the UPRR crossing. Presenter Eric Iwersen said that there was an agreement to let people use the parking lot for train crossing egress on the west side of the tracks,

as a pedestrian route, but it is not the safest situation because the route leads directly into a parking lot instead of a sidewalk or clearly designated pedestrian path.

Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz ask about whether an over pass over the UPRR could be considered. Presenter Eric Iwersen said funding would be prohibitive as overpasses are very expensive to build and Tempe had no plans to do so.

Commissioner Kim Fisher asked about pedestrian traffic in the industrial sections (C-E) and why the sidewalk was only listed as being 4 foot wide. Presenter indicated that the budget constraints were part of the picture, but that there is not much pedestrian activity in that area as it is industrial.

Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz asked why the plan gave 7 foot bike path widths to bikes and only 4 foot sidewalk widths to pedestrians and wheelchair users. Presenter Eric Iwersen said that in many areas the sidewalk would not be changed from its existing width, which is how it is depicted in the pictures. Existing sidewalks would be maintained unless there were reasons, such as disrepair, to replace it.

Discussion included comments saying that sufficient funding should be sought by the city of Tempe to increase the width of sidewalks when they are 4 foot wide, where possible.

The Commission expressed their appreciation for the presentation and indicated that it was good to know what direction the city is headed in this project and that it is important to keep the UPRR crossing a high priority as it affects many people with disabilities.

(Commissioner Kim Fisher left the meeting at 7:15 p.m. due to a schedule conflict.)

### **Agenda Item 3 – White Cane Day Follow up – Chair Irene Mochel**

Discussion was held regarding the vendor comments received regarding, “**Tempe Presents: White Cane Day: A Resource Fair**” which was held October 15, 2015 at the Lower Level of the Tempe Library at 3500 S. Rural, Tempe, Arizona.

Chair Irene Mochel thanked the Commissioners who made themselves and their volunteers available to set up and tear down the event as well as serve as guides.

While there was a great turnout of 26 vendors, it was a concern that it was lightly attended and some vendors left early. Discussion was held around whether the event being held during the week could have been a contributing factor as well as whether the publicity was sufficient. Vendor comments indicated that the event could be improved next year by ensuring that we:

- Provide name tags for the vendors so they can ID vendors v attendees
- Have the event duration be less than 6 hours (i.e. 4 hours is sufficient)
- Not have it on a Saturday; (In 2016, October 15<sup>th</sup> is on a Saturday)
- Disseminate publicity earlier to facilitate word of mouth and other publications saturation (i.e. a year or 6 months prior so it can be included in various calendars.)

Discussion was held on publicity saturation, and location to identify information that can be included and/or increased for next year, starting earlier to provide more opportunity for dissemination via word of mouth and other media. Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz said the information could never be out too early as people compile annual calendars of events. He said he felt disappointed that more help from the city wasn't forthcoming in getting the word out. Staff indicated that PIO did put out information via the usual publicity routes. However it is up to the media outlets to determine what they wish to promote.

It was stated that people who are blind or who have low vision may rely more on word of mouth information, as much of social media and other information outlets are not accessible to people who have low vision or blindness. Some outlets included:

ASU Disability Resource Center	Ability360 magazine
Water bill insert	City webpage banner
Tempe Magazine	Sunsounds
Upcoming events area of the Library	

This year's publicity included Public Information Officer Marie Chapple Camacho's services. She facilitated a social media push and Ginny Belousek, Diversity Specialist facilitated Diversity Department webpage information posting. Over 2000 mailers with Braille provided by Foundation for Blind Children went out to the

Diversity mailing list which includes those who were invited to last year's Disability Awards. And about 400 were distributed to other locations around town.

This item will be on next month's agenda as vendor surveys are still being received.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – 2016 Mayor's Disability Awards Planning – Chair Irene Mochel**

Current status of planning for the 2016 Mayor's Disability Awards:

- The Mayor has been confirmed as the presenter of the awards.
- The location will be the Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA) on April 12, 2016, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The contract has been signed by the Diversity office and a deposit provided through last year's fund raising efforts.
- The ramp and stage will be requested by TCA from the Pyle Center. This is the same ramp and stage used in prior years.
- The grant for the Tempe Diablo scholarships was applied for, and notification of award was received. The grant covers the student scholarships and up to \$2,000 for disability accommodations, such as ASL interpreters.

Discussion was held on how to proceed regarding meeting times, sending out nomination forms, fund raising, and involvement by other people in the award selection process was held.

While an individual winner from last year volunteered to be a speaker this year, it was discussed that a call should go out to get a selection of speakers to choose from, if possible.

The planning meetings will be scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. open to the public and commissioners who wish to participate. Staff is directed to schedule a meeting room based on availability.

Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz indicated that he would like to see others be the decision makers selecting winners so as to remove any appearance of conflict of

interest. He suggested asking Cindy Kominska, Ron Brooks, Robert Kizere, Directors of Special Education or their equivalent, others who have community involvement, Tempe Community Council representatives, etc.

### **Agenda Item 5 –Employment in Tempe – Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz**

Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz requested information on comparable census data to determine disability resident and employment data in Tempe, if possible, for discussion for next month's meeting in order to compare how we are doing in hiring people with disabilities in Tempe. The 2004 ADA Task Force Report had this information which we can use to compare with 2015 data.

Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz also indicated that we should look into any internship opportunities for people with disabilities in the City, asking whether there was an inventory of such. Also a search of job development agencies serving Tempe should be completed.

### **Agenda Item 6 - Announcements**

Commissioner Tom Ringhofer requested that, "Accessible Restroom Stalls" be placed on the agenda for next month. He has run into people using the accessible stalls for everything but disability access lately. He wants to discuss putting an article in the water bill reminding people to keep it open for wheelchair users.

Staff reported that several documents on events related to employment were in Commissioner's folders.

Motion to adjourn made by Vice Chair Paul Bennewitz and seconded by Commissioner Jeff Oats and Diane Moran. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Prepared by: Michele Stokes

Reviewed by: Rosa Inchausti

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Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Director